



News Release

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MSHA proposes new standards for underground coal mine rescue teams *Proposed rule continues Miner Act implementation*

ARLINGTON, Va. - The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today published in the *Federal Register* a proposed rule enhancing the availability and effectiveness of mine rescue teams for underground coal mines. MSHA also announced four public hearings to be held on this proposed rule, as well as another proposed rule MSHA published today regarding mine rescue team equipment.

MSHA's proposed rules on mine rescue teams:

- Require coal mine operators to make available two certified mine rescue teams.
- Include criteria for certifying the qualifications of mine rescue teams.
- Require mine rescue team members to be available at the mine within one hour from the mine rescue station.
- Increase training for coal mine rescue team members from 40 to 64 hours annually.
- Require coal mine rescue team members to have practical experience as an underground coal miner or member of a mine rescue team.
- Require mine rescue team members to participate in training at each mine serviced by the team and have knowledge of the operations and ventilation at the mine.
- Require mine rescue team members to participate annually in two local mine rescue contests.
- Include criteria for local mine rescue contests to improve rescue skills.

MSHA also published a proposed rule on mine rescue team equipment that applies to underground coal and metal and nonmetal mines, requiring two additional hours of breathable air from their self-contained breathing apparatuses and gas detectors to measure potentially dangerous gasses they could encounter during rescue operations.

Public hearings on both proposed rules will be held beginning at 9 a.m. local time on October 23 in Salt Lake City; October 25 in Lexington, Ky.; October 30 in Charleston, W.Va.; and November 1 in Birmingham, Ala.

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